The Cryptozoology Review

Vol. 3, No. 3 Winter-Spring 1999

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Editorial

Welcome to another issue of *The Cryptozoology Review*. Apologies are in order for the lateness of this issue–as hard-working students, socialites and researchers, time is a precious but quickly used commodity for the editors. We are also dedicated to making sure that each issue of *TCR* is of excellent quality, whether it be in terms of research, content or simple grammar. We would much rather produce a superior product that is a few weeks late than print up a punctual but sloppy issue. Such is the practice of most journals. We hope you agree with this ethos.

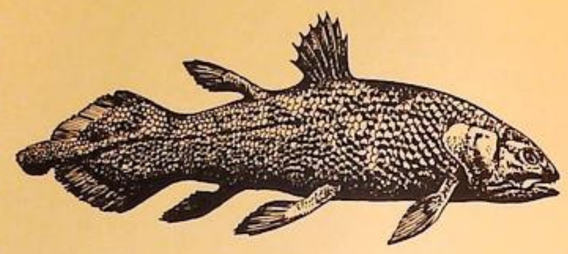
You may have noticed the slightly different layout of this issue. I have reduced the margins, and on many pages broken the text into columns–I feel both of these features lend a more professional, magazine-like feel to *TCR*. Please let me know what you think of the new layout.

Another somewhat new feature in this issue is an expanded review section. We have published book and periodical reviews in *TCR* in the past, but this issue features more reviews than usual. Books are extremely important research tools, and every cryptozoologist should strive to build large libraries filled with books not just about cryptozoology but also general zoology. As such, you may find reviews of reptile books next to those of books on sea serpents, bats, and sasquatch.

I feel reviews are also important because books are relatively expensive and it is often hard to decide which books are worth buying on a given subject. It is my hope that book reviews in *TCR* will introduce you to excellent new books well worth buying, and even books *not* worth buying.

As usual, I would like to remind you that we always welcome comments and criticisms about *TCR*. Also welcome are letters, articles or book reviews. We consider unsolicited manuscripts for publication, or you can contact me with ideas you have for articles and other submissions. Finally, please send us clippings and other news items from your local papers; personal reports of a cryptozoological nature are welcome as well.

-- Ben S. Roesch



About *The Cryptozoology Review*

The Cryptozoology Review is published three times a year by Ben S. Roesch. Subscriptions are (in Canadian currency) $16.00 in Canada, $18.00 (air mail) in the US (or $14.00 US funds), and $22.00 (air mail) in all other countries (or equivalent amount in British [£10.00] or American funds [$16.00]). Please write to the editor in regards to ordering back issues and sample copies. Method of payment: In the US, Canada, and the UK, you may pay by personal check, money order (International MO outside of Canada), or well-concealed cash (all in either Canadian funds or the equivalent in US or UK funds). In other countries, you can pay by well-concealed cash (in any currency), or by International Money Order (in US or Canadian funds only, please). If you pay in funds other than Canadian, American, or British, please make sure that you send the amount equivalent to the subscription rate. All checks and money orders should be made out to "Ben S. Roesch". If there are any problems with payment, contact the editor. Also, for those that run their own cryptozoological publications, keep in mind that we are always willing to exchange subscriptions, as long as the relative prices are about equal. How you can help: If you are interested in contributing your cryptozoological artistic, writing and/or editing skills to TCR, please contact the editor. We take unsolicited manuscripts and artwork! Send the editor anything you think we might be interested in, and we will review it and get back to you. Please write your article professionally and fully-referenced. We are non-profit, so payment is in copies (2 for an article, 1 for a review). Legal stuff: Everything in TCR is copyrighted! Please do not reproduce anything without permission. We usually approve requests to reprint material, provided we know what it is used for, and it would save both of us a lot of trouble. Of course you may quote us and our articles, but please cite it properly. Thanks!

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On the cover: Fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*). Illustration by Richard Ellis.

On this page: Coelacanth (*Latimeria chalumnae*). Illustration by Richard Ellis.

Letters

We welcome letters on any thoughts you may have about TCR or its contents. If you write us a letter, please tell us whether or not it is fine with you to publish it in an upcoming issue. We reserve the right to edit letters for content and/or clarity.

Big Bird Sighting

The editor received the following report from a woman from Arkansas. As she writes, she wishes to remain anonymous, but I have her name and contact on file.

Your giant bird sightings were interesting [she is referring to the various reports of big birds found on my web site]. I think I have seen a giant bird but I have not had the nerve to tell anyone but my husband. So if you use my story, please change my name and address.

I am a fairly good amateur birder and can identify most species fairly easily, even at a distance, and by silhouette. This particular event happened in summer, about mid-afternoon. I was in a open area and looked up at the partly-cloudy sky. I saw one bird soaring. I could see it plainly enough to think it was a vulture or buzzard, which are common around here. I could see very plainly the separated wingtips. I thought the bird was flying unusually high, but I had no idea how high until I watched it disappear BEHIND a cumulous cloud! Of course I cannot say for certain how high the cloud was, but I have seen smaller airplanes flying through and above cumulus. The bird had to be enormous. I suppose there is the possibility that it was a plane or glider painted to look like a bird, flight feathers and all. If so, they did a very creditable job. I have never seen anything since that looked that large and I have seen vultures, eagles, and even one osprey in my state. There is no comparison.

Frogman or a Deer? – A Lesson About Cryptozoological Eyewitness Reports

It was about 12 or 1 a.m., and I was driving home on this back road that slices through the trees, well away from the city, when I notice an object up ahead on the road. I was well familiar with this route and I knew it wasn't a post or any normal landmark. As I got closer it began to take shape and I thought I was seeing a person walking along the road, most likely a hitch-hiker or someone stranded, I figured. As I began to contemplate whether I was going to pick him up, I realized there was something seriously wrong with the physical appearance of this "person." What I had at first assumed was a tan overcoat instead seemed to be the colour of the entire body, and the body itself, though on two feet, was too thin to be a normal person. Then the car-lights hit its eyes and they illuminated in such a manner that I then knew that the object was not human at all but some sort of two-legged animal! Naturally I was very startled, my heart began racing at this revelation and I was further alarmed because it looked to be facing the opposite side of the road, as if about ready to run across. The animal looked to be a little under five feet, with a slightly hunched back and jointed arms at its side. I couldn't make out the face due to the distance still between us but the eyes remained, glowing red and green. This created a grim psychological effect, making the sight more frightening.

Terrified, my mind immediately searched though my mental database at what this could have been. Since it was biped my first thoughts were bigfoot, but it was too thin and lanky for me to identify it as such. The only other non-human biped I could possibly relate it to was the Loveland Frog! Yes, of course, I thought! That immediately made sense: the area was somewhat marshy, though it was winter. Perhaps it was migrating or had recently been hibernating in the marsh? As far fetched as the idea sounds now, it was the only solution I could give to the bizarre spectacle I saw before me.

My emergency theory didn't make the scene any more comforting, and my mind continued to race madly as I tried to comprehend the reality of what was down the road. It would only be a few seconds until the car and the creature would be within 20 ft [6 m] of each other, and then I'd have a definite view.

I must have slowed the car down to about 40 mph [70 kph], fearing the creature would run across the road. I watched it as I neared, waiting for a clearer, closer view, and get a good look at the head. Then it turned, and stretched itself out into a deer. As I watched, the deer retreated back into the marsh, leaving me still confused at what had just happened.

Seeing deer at night is fairly common to drivers in my area, and I had seen several myself. But in this case, the deer was standing facing me, which was an unfamiliar sight because deer don't walk parallel to roads for fear of cars: you always see them from the side as they prepare, or are in the process of running across the road. And by facing me at a distance, it looked to be two legged. Since my mind could not identify with this image, it began to morph into what I was expecting to see. Since I first thought it was a person, and then a 'person-like' entity, I actually believed I was seeing arms on it. But then again, I wasn't focusing on looking at the arms, I just naturally expected them to be there. The way the light shined on the animal, with even the smallest shadows given off from the light source being at an angle, I remember seeing what I

thought were the elbows. The head was unclear, and I couldn't make it out entirely though it did seem dark in colour. The deer might have had its head slightly turned, so to overlap the two ears from being seen.

If the deer hadn't turned and lengthened its body before me or something else had caught my attention (e.g., an on-coming car)–some distraction which would cause me to not get the close look that I did get–I very well could have missed the opportunity to properly identify the mystery animal. I could very well still be convinced I saw a cryptid that night. I am not someone who gets overly excited and carries an overactive imagination, but at the time the frogman theory was the only one I could think of.

I have no doubt this type of misinterpretation can lead to convincing but misleading reports. This event makes me extra careful when investigating reports or interviewing witnesses.

Nick Sucik
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Errata

The following errors have been noticed in *The Cryptozoology Review* vol. 3 no. 2. (Thanks to Darren Naish for spotting them).

On p. 6 the polar bear is referred to as *Thalarctos maritimus*. The scientific name for the polar bear is, of course, *Ursus maritimus*.

On p. 7, the long-finned pilot whale was referred to as *Globicephala melaena*. The specific name now in use is *melas*.

In Darren Naish's article on ziphiid whales, Bahamonde's beaked whale is spelt incorrectly as Bahamond's ... .

Exchange

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Exotic Zoology is the bimonthly newsletter of cryptozoology, published in an 8-page magazine format with illustrations. Features news of new species, rediscovered species, and evidence for still-unconfirmed animals. Also included are articles, reviews of books, and reader correspondence. Editor: Matt Bille, author of *Rumors of Existence* (Hancock House, 1995). For a sample issue and subscription information, please send $1 to: Exotic Zoology, 3405 Windjammer Drive, Colorado Springs, CO, 80920, USA. Email: MattWriter@AOL.com.

A Compendium of Cryptids

("All the latest cryptozoology news fit to print")

by Ben S. Roesch

Monkeying Around the World

The alleged existence of sasquatch and other unknown primates around the world is a controversial subject. Certainly, recent developments have only magnified this controversy.

In China, conservation officials told the press in December, 1998, that they have concluded that the *yeren* (or wildman) does not exist, based on nearly 20 years of investigations. "A number of systematic scientific expeditions have found that all reported sightings of the [*yeren*] were actually other wild animals," forestry and wildlife conservation director Zhang Jianlong told the Xinhua news agency. "I just don't believe the story, and many scientists agree with me," Zhang added. He also pointed out that most bigfoot researchers lacked specialized scientific training. State Administration of Forestry, Liu Yongfan, concurred with Zhang and said that local conservation officials never found traces of the creature during many years of regular field patrols in the mountainous Shennongjia region of central Hubei province, where the creature is thought to live. In fact, traces of the *yeren* have supposedly been found: droppings, footprints up to 40 cm long (18 inches), and hair samples. It is possible that Liu was referring to the absence of more convincing evidence such as the actual capture of the beast, or good photographic or video evidence. Another Chinese reserve official, Yan Xun, opined that "[t]here are no basic primate foods such as berries or broad-leaf trees in the mountains of Shennongjia; the conditions in Shennongjia are unsuited for sustaining the life of any primate, including the socalled bigfoot." Cryptozoologist Loren Coleman has criticized the claims, noting that the press constantly referred to the wildman as the *yeti*, not the *yeren*, and that China's leading wildman researchers were never consulted for their viewpoint (Internet post, January 1, 1999). Regardless of the government's official statement, a $60 240 (U.S.) reward continues to be offered by the Shennongjia Nature Reserve for the capture of the *yeren*. In January, 1999, Chinese officials condemned the reward, saying that it mislead people and could lead to environmental harm.

The *yeti* has also suffered of late. Readers will recall Reinhold Messner's claim that the *yeti* is in fact a known subspecies of brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) (see *The Cryptozoology Review* 3 [2]: 6-7). Liu Wulin, director of the Wild Life Protection Department of the Tibet Commission for Forestry, feels the same way, and has done research on the topic. "In my own opinion, they are likely to be brown bears who walk and pose in ways similar to human beings," he told the *China Tibet* magazine, a Chinese/English bi-monthly. Liu has worked in the Tibet Autonomous Region for over 20 years and presided over the construction of most of its nature reserves. His conclusions about the *yeti* have arisen from his surveys in Medog, Gyirong and Nang counties as well as in Tingri, Dinggye and Yadong in the Himalayas. "During all these surveys, I've found only the traces of brown bears," he said. He has examined the skins and bones locals say belong to the *yeti*, but says "I can only determine that those are from animals [mammals?]." For example, one piece of skin kept in a monastery in Gongbo'gyamda County and said to be from a *yeti* belongs to a brown bear, although its colour is slightly different from typical brown bears.

Liu has also examined many alleged *yeti* footprints, up to 20 cm [8 inches] long, but he thinks they were from a brown bear because the prints did not have arches like those of a human. I would disagree with this point because most researchers don't maintain that the *yeti* is closely related to humans–in fact it is often considered one of the least human-like of the mystery primates.

Liu is convinced of the brown bear's abilities to move upright and thus appear human-like. He tells of a rather unusual–and apparently unverified–bear ritual: every summer, dozens of brown bears come to a cave called Zhemoin Lhakang (which means "the Sutra Hall for Brown Bears") in Amdo. There, they allegedly line up in a long queue and enter the cave one at a time. A few days later, they exit the cave, also in a one-by-one procession. "No one knows why," Liu said. It is hard to say whether we are to assume that the bears are standing up when they enter and exit the cave, and I am unconvinced of the story's validity. Another, more believable, story comes from herdsmen in Zongga, Mangkam and Gungjor counties. They call brown bears "human bears"

because they have seen bears run upright after a human and even put on hats. These bears also get their nickname from their tendency to "ride" horses when attacking them; basically, a bear may jump onto the horse's back to make it collapse. This is not unusual behaviour. Other predators employ such tactics; when lions take down prey, one or more often tries to fell the prey animal by leaping onto its back.

According to Liu, brown bears frequent areas where humans live, often looking for food. Some encounters may occur during the winter when the bears may wake up extremely hungry from semi-hibernation. Upon encountering people, Liu says a bear usually stands upright to face the person. "People are usually too scared to observe the bear closely," Liu said. "They could only describe what they remember, such as a red mouth, red nose and red hair, and talk about wild men." In Medog, where local residents reported hearing roars from "wild men", Liu found hairs and footprints belonging to brown bears. Liu says that folk tales about wild men are common in the Himalayas. Twice, after hearing reports from local herdsman and hunters of snowmen with light grey hairs and erect postures, Liu investigated and found brown bears whose hair was lighter in colour than those from other parts of Tibet.

Liu's investigations are to be commended, as he has done a good deal of valuable research. Whether one agrees with his explanation of the *yeti* as a brown bear is a matter of opinion, but I think it is quite likely that a number of *yeti* sightings have been caused by poor sightings of brown bears.

Perhaps the most controversial of mystery primates is the sasquatch or bigfoot. Recently, much has been said about the validity of the famous Patterson film, a short piece of footage shot in 1967 by the late Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin that allegedly shows a female sasquatch striding along a sand bank in Bluff Creek, California. On December 28, 1998, the Fox television network broadcast a special entitled "World's Greatest Hoaxes". The producers present the Patterson film as one of these hoaxes, based on the deposition of one Clyde Reinke. He claimed that Patterson was an employee at American National Enterprises, a film company, and had hoaxed the film under the company's guidance. No documentation, such as paychecks and other paper evidence, is available to confirm Reinke's claims. It is hard to simply believe the word of a man who may be out there to just make a buck, so pending further evidence one cannot make much of Reinke's testimony.

Another debate rages on about an additional claim discrediting the Patterson film. Sasquatch researchers Chris Murphy and Cliff Crook contend that they can make out a zipper or some other man-made object in several frames of the film, blown up 50x or more. It appears as a black "bell-shaped" object–possibly the pull of a zipper–around the animal's torso. Murphy would like to publish photographs showing the "zipper", but cannot due to copyright restrictions. Crook thinks the "zipper" is proof that the film is a fake, but Murphy is less sure, and was not happy when the media blew the report out of proportion, saying that it meant the sasquatch itself was all a fraud (John Green, Internet post, February 3, 1999). Some sasquatch researchers, such as John Kirk, think the "zipper" is simply a tuft of fur. Although he tends to think the Patterson film was not genuine, Matt Bille (1999) expressed doubt about finding such a small object on the 2 mm high figure of the alleged sasquatch on the grainy original film.

Whatever the outcome of the various news discussed above, it is certain that mystery primates remain one of the most hotly debated topics in cryptozoology.

Sources: Anon. 1998. Chinese consign the Yeti to realm of mythology. *Irish Times*, December 15. // Anon. 1999. China clamps down on tours in search of Bigfoot. *San Francisco Examiner*, January 14. // Bille, Matt. 1999. A barrel of apes. Exotic Zoology 6 (1): 2-4. // Hubbell, John. 1999. Two Bigfoot buffs say film is a hoax. *San Jose* [California] *Mercury News*, January 9. // Zhi Yonghong & Shen Lutao. 1998. 'Snowman' may be brown bear. *China Daily*, October 24.

Giant Sturgeon in Lake Superior?

On December 25, 1998, I received an e-mail from a man from Michigan who had seen an enormous fish while fishing in Lake Superior. He wished to remain anonymous for fear of ridicule (I will refer to him here as "Bob"), but I have his name and e-mail on record and can vouch as much as possible for his sincerity. The following is his account of the incident, edited slightly for clarity and content:

> I do not know if you have heard anything like this (I had not, until it happened to me). In July of 1998, I took a trip to Stannard Rock, a reef about 45 miles [72 km] off the north coast of Michigan in Lake Superior. I went to fish for lake trout, which normally average 15-20 lbs [7-9 kg], but occasionally reach 50 lbs [23 kg] in this area. This is a very unique area of the lake, in that the water surounding the reef is well over 600 feet [183 m] deep, but comes nearly straight up on to the reef which is less than 10 feet [3 m] deep.
>
> Having located a school of trout on the sonar, we (there were 4 others, plus a captain and first mate) soon were hooking fish, which we could clearly see in the shallow water of the reef. After about 2 hours of fishing, we noticed a disturbance in the water further up on the reef, similar to the boils behind a boat, or in heavy currents in a river. This was odd, in that it was very localized, and there was little wind to set up a current. As the disturbance appeared to be aproaching the area in front of the boat, we quit fishing and went up to try to see what it was. We thought maybe it was a school of trout feeding on baitfish, but as it passed approximately 30 to 40 feet [9-12 m] in front of the boat, we could see that it appeared to be a huge fish of some type.
>
> We were in a 32 foot [10 m] Sea-Ray boat, but I don't know how wide the boat was (likely around 8 feet [2.5 m]). The fish made a kind of half turn, and got within 15-20 feet [4-6 m] of the side of the boat as it passed into deep water. It was the size of this fish which made it incredible: it appeared to be over 20 feet [6 m] long (I am not kidding), and quite wide compared to the boat. We got a very good look as it passed--Lake Superior is *very* clear--and it looked smooth, grey on top and fading into lighter on the sides. We could not make out any features such as eyes, gills, etc., but it had large front fins, and a very long tail (a "v" shape, with a much longer lobe on top). The sonar showed that we were in 30-35 feet [9-11 m] of water, and the fish was just under the surface. It looked to be about 4 feet [1.2 m] deep (top to bottom of the fish as compared to body length) and the top lobe of the tail was causing the disturbance we had first noticed. After passing beyond the rear of the boat, it went into deep water and we lost sight of it.
>
> The only thing we could guess it could be was a lake sturgeon, but the largest we had heard of was 200-300 lbs [90-136 kg], and this had to be much larger. I cannot impress enough how huge it was, even compared to the large boat we were in. The only visual I can give would be that it looked like the films I have seen on television of large sharks cruising near boats.
>
> We have only told a few people about the sighting. Some people have sugested that it was a normal sized fish magnified by the water, but again, as it passed the boat it was just under the surface, the tail making the aformentioned disturbance of the surface. I would appreciate any info you might have on something like this, such as any other reports, if just to prove to family members that I am not crazy! The captain of the boat did not want anything said, as he feared bad rumors, and I wish to respect that. I have never heard of a "Lake Superior Monster" or any such thing, and I think it had to be a giant stergeon--I just have not heard of any remotely this large. Please don't post my name anywhere, as most people would not believe this and I don't want to deal with the ridicule. If you have any questions, please e-mail me, as I am curious as to what I may have seen.

If this account is accurate and not greatly exagerrated–I have no reason to think it is–than I am tempted to say that Bob saw an enormous sturgeon (Acipenseridae). The details of the fish's appearance agree with a sturgeon identity, particularly the "v"-shaped tail with the long upper lobe. Sturgeons are the only fish found in Lake Superior with this type of tail. Certainly, the size of the creature alone is indicative of a sturgeon identity, as no Great Lakes fish can match them for size. Even so, the individual that was seen by Bob was larger than the accepted maximum size for any sturgeon. The largest sturgeon is the white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*), which can reach 6.1 m (20 ft) and over 900 kg (2000 lb). This species fits well with the Lake Superior giant, but it is restricted to western North America, particularly British Columbia. (It is concievable, but not known to me, that some were introduced to the Great Lakes at some point). The only sturgeon that lives in the Great Lakes is the lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*), which reaches about 3 m (10 ft) in length and a weight of 140 kg (310 lb). This is far from the dimensions of the 20+ ft fish seen by Bob, but there are a number of reports of sturgeons much larger than their accepted size. I think it is quite possible that Bob saw an unusually large lake sturgeon. Shock may have also caused some unintentional exagerration of the size of the fish seen. Regardless, the fish was still a monster.

Source: Coad, Brian. 1995. *Encyclopedia of Canadian Fishes*. (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Nature).

Pumas Across North America

The theory that pumas (*Felis concolor*) (Fig. 1) still exist in the northeastern United States has been gaining strength in recent years, with more sightings and confirmed physical evidence. In 1996, a puma report was confirmed in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. Unconfirmed reports were made in August, 1998, in the Fryeburg area of Maine and over the New Hampshire border; Maine wildlife officials responded by asking selectmen to warn residents. Some of the most convincing evidence turned up in the winter if 1994-1995 in Craftsbury, Vermont. Game wardens followed tracks and and found scat and other physical evidence that was later analyzed for DNA and identified as belonging to a puma. Still, for some reason the evidence remains insufficient for most wildlife officials and government offices to acknowledge the creature's existence. (On the other hand, the Minister of Natural Resources of New Brunswick offically recognized the puma as existing in that province in March, 1993). Pumas offically disappared from the northeastern United States by the late 1800's under heavy hunting pressure by settlers.

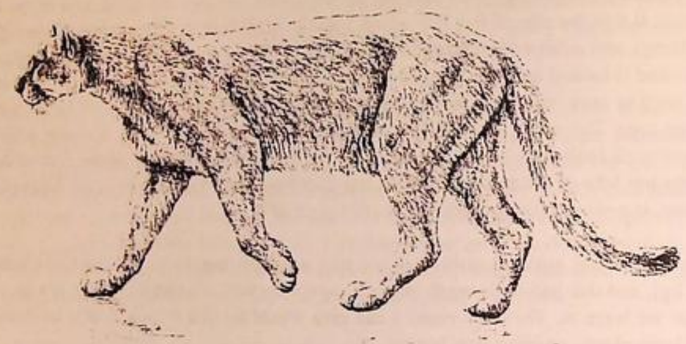

Fig. 1. Puma (*Felis concolor*). Illustration by Mauricio Antón, from Turner & Antón (1997).

Some of the most recent evidence came on December 24, 1998, when Maureen Clark, a photographer and bear trainer in Lincoln, New Hampshire, said she and a nephew saw a small, rusty colored, long-tailed animal clearly in her backyard. Unfortunately, by the time she grabbed a video camera, the animal had walked further off, and she managed to get only about 6 seconds of tape. "It's not like it was a monster, but it wasn't a house cat," Clark said. New Hampshire Fish and Game biologists who studied the footage could not reach any conclusions because the view of the animal is obscured by trees and foliage. Some thought the animal could have been a mountain lion, but others were more skeptical. Biologists Kent Gustafson and Mark Ellingwood thought they could make out a striped tail and pointed ears on the cat in the video, two characteristics more indicative of a large feral cat or a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) (Fig. 2) with an unusually long tail.

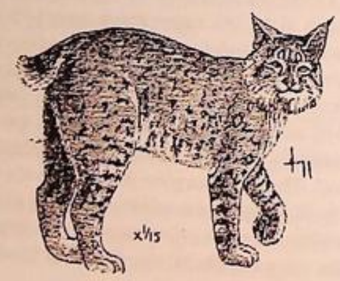

Fig. 2. Bobcat (*Felis rufus*). From Hall & Kelson (1959).

More evidence for eastern puma survival–this time from Ontario–appeared in March, 1999. Ontario Provincial Police reported that a puma had been sighted twice near a resedential area in Marathon, Ontario, near Lake Superior. Another puma was seen about 450 km (250 miles) away in Algoma Highlands. Murray Monk of Red Rock, Ontario, and president of the Canadian National Trappers Alliance, was not surprised by the reports. He saw a puma standings in an open Ontario Hydro corridor near Orient Bay in 1995. He said: "There's no way you can mistake it. They've got a big blocky head and a body like a Great Dane, [with a] long, beautiful tail." Monk added that sightings are usually ignored: "It's like reporting you've seen an alien; people refuse to believe it."

In Missouri, meanwhile, evidence for the existence of pumas was found in late November, 1998. Conservation officials found a mountain lion head and pelt along a country road in Pulaski County. The Missouri Department of Conservation reported that x-rays showed that the puma had been shot through the eye. Interestingly, they have a record of a man who admitted killing a puma on the Peck Ranch Conservation Area in 1994, shooting it in the eye. He skinned the big cat and discarded the pelt, fearing he would be caught. Many sightings of pumas have been made by people in Pulaski, Maries, and Phelps counties over the years since the puma was allegedly wiped out by hunters more than 70 years ago.

Finally, a puma may have been responsible–in my opinion at least–for a "weird animal" seen in Manitowoc, Wisconsin on December 12, 1998. At about 4:45 p.m. teenagers Michael M. and Jerance F. were walking along the Wisconsin Central Railroad tracks in the west end of the town when Michael heard a scream. "It was a deep roar, screeching deep, and it was a growl," he said. The two turned around to see "a large creature rising behind us, maybe 45 yards to the south." When the creature began to move towards the boys, they ran off. The incident was reminescent of a bigfoot encounter to many. However, Michael's mother Debbie said that while she supported her son's story, she thought it may not have been bigfoot. She said: "But for the most part he did see some kind of white, dirty furred animal that made the most bizarre noise he had ever heard ... At first they thought a train was coming and that the sound was from that. But then they looked and they did not see a train. They heard its weird sound and that's when they saw what they did." I think a puma is a good match with the creature the two teenagers saw. Obviously they did not get a very good look at the animal, but the description of dirty fur with white fits well with a puma. Most telling is the noise the creature made. Pumas are infamous for their ability to produce an unnerving, high-pitched, screaming roar, and are also quite capable of growling.

Sources: Anon. 1998. Parts Of Mountain Lion Found. *Yahoo State News Service*, December 1. // Anon. 1999. Ontario cougar sightings. *Globe & Mail*, March 20. // Anon. 1999. X-ray shows mountain lion was shot. *Missouri Conservationist* 60 (4): 28. // Emery, Michelle. 1999. New Hampshire biologists question evidence of mountain lion's return. *http://www.nandotimes.com*, January 11. // Hall, E. Raymond, & Keith R. Kelson. 1959. *Mammals of North America*, Vol. 2. (New York: Ronald Press Co.). // Trainor, Joeseph. 1998. Weird animal surprises pair in Wisconsin. *UFO Roundup* vol. 3 no 50 (December 15). // Turner, Alan, & Mauricio Antón. 1997. *The Big Cats and their Fossil Relatives*. (New York: Columbia University Press).

Cats and Dogs

Although the case for the existence of big cats–specifically, pumas–in the United Kingdom is extremely strong, it is useful to remember that a number of sightings are surely mistaken identifications of domestic cats and dogs, as well as other animals. Two recent cases highlight this fact.

On January 4, 1999, police in Tyrone county, Ireland, believed they had identified the cause of several reports of a large puma-like cat made over that past weekend. The culprit? A large St. Bernard dog reported missing from a household in Beragh. The sightings originated on that Friday in the Aughnacloy area, with descriptions of a "beast" with a long tail and mane prowling fields and outhouses. On Saturday it was seen in the Sixmilecross area of Tyrone; witnesses reported a 5 ft long, 3 ft wide brown animal with green eyes and an unkempt appearance.

One day later, on the other side of the world, in Albany, Oregon–where pumas are known to live–a person called police saying a cougar had been spotted at about 10 a.m. in a field near Oak Elementary School. When officers arrived at the scene, they scoured the area with binoculars and spotted a feline form about six city blocks away (why the news release used this form of measurement is beyond my comprehension). Far from a puma, the public enemy was actually a domestic house cat–albeit a large one. The officers called the dispatcher and noted: "Sure, it was just a calico, but it was a really big one." (Showing police officers actually do have a sense of humour, an officer involved with the St. Bernard sightings in Tyrone country joked: "As he wasn't

wearing the customary keg of brandy round his neck we can understand how there may have been mistaken identity.")

Sources: Anon. 1999. Cougar seen near elementary school was pussycat. *Associated Press*, January 5. // McArdle, Damian. 1999. Saints alive! "Big cat" is a dog. *Belfast Telegraph*, January 4.

News About Nessie

Two sightings have started the monster-watching year at Loch Ness. The first sighting was made by an American tourist who wished to remain anonymous but registered his encounter with the Official Loch Ness Monster Fan Club in Inverness. His report is particularly unusual: apparently, he saw Nessie out of the water, on a beach between Foyers and Dores. The man, from West Virginia, said: "The creature was between 10 and 15 metres in length with a very long neck. I was so startled at the beast appearing out of the darkness that I didn't get time to take a photograph before it scurried off into the water." Out-of-water Nessie reports are very rare, with the last reported incident taking place in 1963, according to Gary Campbell of the Fan Club. I find this new report is a bit much to swallow, especially without any details about the eyewitness.

The second sighting is at the other extreme of Nessie encounters–this time, the eyewitness was swimming in Loch Ness when Nessie made her appearance. In March, Robert Badger, a 50-year-old factory worker in Castlehead, Paisley and a former Nessie researcher, claimed that in 1998 (no specific date is given in any news report that I have seen) he actually had an in-water encounter with Nessie. Badger said: "I was a volunteer with the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau and had to do some underwater work on a boat moored off Temple Pier just across the bay from Urquhart Castle. I swam out from the jetty to where the loch bottom falls sharply away to really deep water. I thought that for safety reasons I shouldn't go any further out when an object materialised out of the gloom in front of me. As I got closer I could see that it was the body of a huge creature moving from my right to my left heading out into the main part of the loch. I couldn't see the end of the beast but I got close enough to touch its skin which had a rough texture." Badger wasted no time in high tailing back to the boat; crew aboard reported him "hydro-planing" towards them. Badger guessed that the body was rounded and about 20 ft (6 m) in diameter. The encounter greatly scared Badger, who has been unwilling to reenter the lake. On the plus side, William Hill Bookmakers awarded him with the annual £500 award for the best Nessie sighting. Badger's sighting is interesting, though it does give much hint as to what it might be. For all we know, it could have been a large sturgeon, one of the explanations for Nessie sightings.

The Loch Ness monster was thought to have appeared on a coin recently. In February, 1999, Steven Whitlie, a bus driver from Alness, Scotland, appealed to the public for information about a unique copper half-penny he had found. On one side of the 1793 coin was a thistle, and on the opposite side was a picture of Loch Ness and what appeared to be Nessie. Whitlie, who is an avid coin collector, had some interesting things to say: "This coin was given to me a few months ago by a local watch repairer who found it in a box of old watches he had been given. I know that about this period local mints were allowed to produce tokens which could incorporate local legends and be used as legal tender. I think it was about 1797 they became illegal and the local mints then had to use the king or queen's head. The Loch Ness coin may be a collector's item to local people but I don't think that it is worth much." However, Gary Campbell posted to the Nessie Internet e-mail list (March 21, 1999) to say that the coin actually showed a horn of plenty and not Nessie.

Loch Ness monster fans around the world will be happy to hear that the Internet now allows anyone to scour the waters of Loch Ness for a glimpse of the elusive Nessie. Computer buff Mikko Takala, who lives near Loch Ness, has installed four video cameras by Loch Ness with the help of the Loch Ness Monster Exhibition Centre in Drumnadrochit; images from the cameras are reproduced on the Internet using digital technology. The cameras were trained on areas where the most Nessie sightings have taken place. Hopefully, some new evidence will arise from this interesting endeavour. If you want to watch for Nessie, go to http://www.lochness.co.uk/livecam.

Sources: Anon. 1999. They've netted Nessie. *Scottish Daily Record*, February 6. // Anon. 1999. Query over Nessie coin. *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, February 27. // Anon. 1999. Swimmer tells of Loch Ness close encounter. *The Herald*, March 8.

Statistics and Sea Monsters

Recently, Dr. Charles Paxton, of the Animal Behaviour Research Group at Oxford University, estimated the number of large marine animals remaining to be discovered, using a statistical method that estimates the diversity of a given population or assemblage. Biologists and geologists use the method , which needs only a small sample, to make guesses as to the size and composition of populations of animals and fossils. *The Economist* explained the method with a chocolate analogy:

> Suppose, for example, that you are given a huge tin of assorted chocolates. Is it possible to work out how many kinds of chocolate there are, and their relative numbers, without tipping them all out on the floor and counting the number of each type? The answer is yes. By repeatedly shaking the tin, removing a single chocolate, noting its type, and then replacing it, it is possible to generalise about the contents of the whole tin. After a rash of initial discoveries, the most common kinds of chocolate will be quickly identified; less common types will turn up sooner or later. If the number of types of chocolate known at each stage is plotted on a graph, it will roughly correspond to a mathematical curve called a hyperbola. Because there are only so many kinds of chocolate available for discovery, the hyperbola rises rapidly, but tends toward a fixed upper limit.

To perform his estimation of the number of undiscovered marine animals greater than 2 m (6 ft) in length, Dr. Paxton performed a historical survey of the number of known creatures matching this size criteria. He began with the tenth edition of Carolus Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae* (1758), which identifies 23 species greater than 2 m long; poring over the subsequent scientific literature, he noted every new species matching his criteria up to 1995. At this point the number of species had risen to 217, but the occurences of new species had dropped considerably. Dr. Paxton fitted a hyperbola to the data for the period from 1830 to 1995, allowing him to estimate its upper limit. His conclusion? There are about 47 species of large marine animals awaiting discovery.

Certainly, there are some possible sources of error in this estimation. Dr. Paxton's results assume that the sampling rate, or chances for people to come across large new species, has remained constant. For example, it is possible that the decline of whaling has reduced the sampling rate, meaning the estimate of 47 new species is too low. Then again, since marine biologists have better equipment today, and fisheries operations are very high, the sampling rate may have risen, meaning 47 new species is too high an estimate.

As for the identities of the creatures awaiting discovery, Dr. Paxton regards the possibility of an entirely new type of animal (such as representing a new order) unlikely, though possible. He is more confident that a few whales and "a couple of new, totally weird sharks" are still out there–certainly nothing for cryptozoologists to complain about. In any case, Dr. Paxton's interesting findings are heartening, even if not entirely precise. I am looking forward to the results of applying statistical methods to freshwater, a project upon which Dr. Paxton has already started to collect data.

Sources: Anon. 1998. Myths, monsters and maths. *The Economist*, November 28: 87. // Paxton, C.G.M. 1998. A cumulative species description curve for large open water marine animals. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom* 78: 1389-91.

Notes on Various New and Rediscovered Species

• Kartakelong Island in the Talaud Archipelago, Indonesia, is home to two new species of rail. One of these, *Gymnocrex talaudensis* (or the Talaud Rail), was discovered in 1996 and was named in 1998 by Frank Lambert. It is known only from a single specimen and two sightings, although people living in the area report that it is not uncommon. This is the third known species of *Gymnocrex*, the others being found elsewhere in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and possibly the Solomon Islands. The other new species, which Lambert has named *Amaurornis magnirostris* (or the Talaud Bush-Hen), is likewise known from only a single collected specimen and several sightings. The status of both of these birds is unknown, but the island's forests are largely intact and neither of the new rails is subject to much hunting. It has been suggested that these birds may be found elsewhere in the Talaud Archipelago. They are the first new species of extant rail to be described since 1991, when Jared Diamond

named *Gallirallus rovianae* from the Solomon Islands.

Source: Taylor, Barry. 1998. *Rails: A Guide to the Rails, Crakes, Gallinules and Coots of the World.* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.)

• A new species of antwren (Fig. 3) was recently described by Bret M. Whitney and José Alvarez Alonso. The new bird, which was named *Herpsilochmus gentryi* (the Ancient Antwren) in honor of the botanist Alwyn H. Gentry, is known from northern Peru and one locality in southern Ecuador. Whitney and Alvarez hypothesize that the bird is a sister species to *H. stictocephalus*, which lives over 1,700 km [1,000 miles] away in Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and parts of Venezuela and Brazil. *H. gentryi* is unfortunately threatened by growth around the nearby city of Iquitos, Peru, as the habitat in which the bird lives is rare and sparsely distributed.

Fig. 3. A typical antwren, the Yellow-Breasted Antwren (*Herpsilochmus axillaris aequatorialis*), male. Illustration by Guy Tudor, from Ridgely and Tudor (1994).

Source: Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. 1994. *The Birds of South America*. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.) // Whitney, Bret M., & Alvarez Alonso, José. 1998. A New *Herpsilochmus* Antwren (Aves: Thamnophilidae) from Northern Amazonian Peru and Adjacent Ecuador: The Role of Edaphic Heterogeneity of *Terra Firme* Forest. *The Auk* 115: 559-76.

• Robert B. Payne of the University of Michigan recently discovered a new species of firefinch, which he has named the Rock Firefinch (*Lagonosticta sanguinodorsalis*). The specific name refers to the blood-red coloration of the male's back (the female has a reddish-brown back). The bird is found in the Jos Plateau in Nigeria. *Lagonosticta* (and a few species in other genera) are hosts of Indigobirds (*Vidua* spp.), brood parasites that are known to mimic the calls of their respective host species. Payne first thought he could have discovered a new species when *Vidua maryae* (the Jos Plateau Indigobird) was heard making a call that did not match any known species of *Lagonosticta*, thus leading him to reexamine the firefinches found in the area. The discovery of *L. sanguinodorsalis* was the result. *V. maryae* and *L. sanguinodorsalis* are the only known species of bird endemic to Nigeria.

Source: Payne, Robert B. 1998. A New Species of Firefinch *Lagonosticta* from Northern Nigeria and Its Association with the Jos Plateau Indigobird *Vidua maryae*. *Ibis* 140: 368-81.

• A new species of the salamander genus *Plethodon* was recently described by James Lazell. The only two known specimens were collected in 1964 near Bay Springs, in Jasper County, Mississippi, and were at that time misidentified as another species of *Plethodon*. The new species, named *P. ainsworthi* in honor of the collector of the type material, J.H. Ainsworth, has unfortunately not been seen since that time. Due to extensive deforestation in the American Southeast, the new salamander may well be in grave danger; as Lazell comments, "[i]t is impossible to guess how many small, cryptic species may have been lost already and difficult to believe we can move quickly enough even to save this one, now that it is known."

Source: Lazell, James. 1998. New Salamander of the Genus *Plethodon* from Mississippi. *Copeia* 1998: 967-70.

• In the last issue of *The Cryptozoology Review* (vol. 3 no. 2), the discovery of a second population of coelacanths (*Latemeria chalumnae*) off Indonesia was reported upon. It was suspected that the new population represented a species unique from the famous *Latemeria chalumnae*, which was discovered off the Comoros in 1938. Now, researchers have officially announced that the Indonesian coelacanths are indeed a new species, dubbed *Latimeria menadoensis* (the species name refers to Menado Tua Island, Indonesia, where the population was discovered). Laurent Pouyaud, of the French Government's Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, expects that tests on the Indonesian coelacanths would reveal that the population is bigger and more genetically diverse than the dwindling assemblage off the Comoros.

Source: Nuttall, Nick. 1999. Second 'living fossil' found on fish cart. *The Times*, March 25.

• Rat-fishes (chimaeras) (Fig. 4) are one of the lesser known cartilaginous fishes, living in deep waters around the world and possessing a strange, other-worldly apperance. New species continue to be discovered; the latest is *Chimaera panthera*, which was recently discovered in waters off New Zealand. The animal was originally found by a local fisherman, who brought the specimen to the National Museum of New Zealand. Dominique Didier Dagit, an authority on chimaeroids, identified it as a new species (the sixth in the genus). Dagit says that she hopes this discovery will lead to increased protection for these unusual elasmobranchs, which remain poorly known.

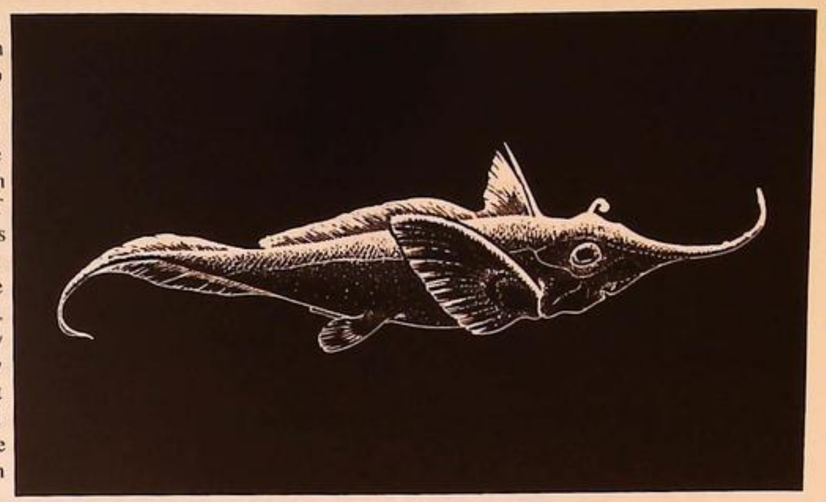

Fig. 4. *Harriotta raleighana*, a typical chimaera. Illustration by Richard Ellis (1996).

Sources: Ichthyologist Discovers A New Fish Species in the Waters of the South Pacific. News Release, Academy of Natural Sciences (Philadelphia), March 30, 1999. // Ellis, Richard. 1996. *Deep Atlantic*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).

• For a $500 donation to the Nature Discovery Fund, you can have a plant or animal named after you. The new fund, organized by the Canadian Museum of Nature, will help finance searches for new species in unexplored regions of Canada. Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood became the first donor to the cause, and a new beetle now has the immortal specific name of *atwoodi*, in honour of the author's father, entomologist Carl Atwood.

Source: Anon. 1998. Bug to be called Atwood. *Canadian Press*, December 11.

Other Cryptozoology News

• Doug Harvey and Chris Johnson, both of Bellbowrie, Australia, had been fishing for about an hour on February 1, 1999, when their 5 m (16 ft) boat bucked and took off towards the mouth of the Brisbane river at high speed, towed by something snagged on the anchor. Other fishermen and an officer from the Department of Fisheries watched from the sidelines as the boat zig-zagged and spun in circles "like a cork." Finally, whatever was towing the boat dove, submerging the boat's bow and snapping the anchor cleat. The incident was described as being straight out of *Jaws*, and the fisheries officer speculated that a large shark was responsible. Coincidentally, just eight days later a similar encounter was reported from New Smyrna Beach, Florida. Rafael Figueroa and Gilbert Luna were fishing in a 5 m (16 ft) boat when something started pulling them out to sea. The boat was thrown about for two hours, and towed 2.4 km (1.5 miles), despite the two men's attempt to reverse the boat with its 90 horsepower engine. Finally the Coast Guard arrived and found a 400 kg (900 lb) manta ray (*Manta birostris*) with a 5.5 m (18 ft) wing span tangled in the boat's anchor line. The manta was released unharmed after about an hour.

Sources: Anon. 1999. Fish catches fishermen. *UPI* release, February 10. // Anon. 1999. "Monster" hijacks Florida boat. *http://www.nandotimes.com*, February 10. // Riggert, Ella. 1999. Fishermen taken on "Jaws" river ride. *Brisbane Courier Mail*, February 1.

• Scotland is more renowned for black pumas than baboons, but on January 17, 1999, a motorist driving near Prestwick Airport in Ayrshire reported narrowly missing a baboon-like creature that ran across the road. Police arrived in time to spot the creature themselves, but it disappeared into the bush when they got within 30 yards (27 m) of it. Checks with the airport, which

had recieved a cargo of livestock, turned up no reports of missing baboons. Furthermore, no zoos in Scotland hold baboons. This lead police to presume that it was a escaped pet, but Richard O'Grady, the director of the Glasgow Zoo, thought it unlikely because baboons are large aggressive creatures. I have yet to hear anymore about this Scottish baboon.

Sources: Frew, Callum. 1999. Police hunt for the Yeti of Ayr. *Scottish Daily Record*, January 18. // McBeth, Jim & Thomas Campbell. 1999. Baboon loose in wilds of Ayrshire. *Scotsman*, January 18.

• Today, no bear species are known from Africa, but during the Holocene and Pleistocene, a population of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*) existed in northern Africa. This bear was thought to have become extinct during the Neolithic period, several thousand years ago. However, there have been various accounts of bears existing in northern Africa until the 1800's; in 1834 a specimen was apparently killed, but the carcass was not preserved. A description was published of the supposed carcass, and based on this the scientific name *Ursus crowtheri* was proposed. Records during Roman times are especially compelling, but there was no good evidence to support the survival of the bear. Now, Watik Hamdine of the University of Tizi-Ouzou (Morocco) and colleagues Michel Thévenot and Jacques Michaux of the University of Montpellier (France) have carbon dated the bear bones discovered in a cavern in Algeria at about 420 to 600 A.D. This confirms the bear's existence into historical times.

Source: Hamdine, Watik, Thévenot, Michel, & Jacques Michaux. 1998. Histoire récente de l'ours brun au Maghreb. *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Sciences*, série 3, 321: 565-70. // Raynal, Michel. 1999. Internet post, February 26.

• An expedition hoping to film a live giant squid (*Architeuthis* sp.) off New Zealand's east coast ended recently. Unfortunately, no giant squid were encountered, but information about the deep-sea fauna of the area was gathered. A documentary about the search will air in June 2000.

Sources: Anon. 1999. Optimism over giant squid bid. *Christchurch* [New Zealand] *Press*, March 23. // Ellis, Richard. 1999. Pers. comm., March 31.

Thanks to: Martin Adamson, Chad Arment, Matt Bille, Loren Coleman, Peter Darben, Richard Ellis, E. Lee Fitzhugh, Craig Heinselman, Dave Walsh for clippings and/or opinions.

A Review of Alleged Sea Serpent Carcasses Worldwide (Part Four -- 1907-1924)

by Ben S. Roesch

This article is the fourth part of a series examining all alleged sea serpent carcasses reported in the literature. Previous portions were published in *The Cryptozoology Review* 2(2): 6-27 (1648-1880), 2(3): 25-25 (1881-1896), and 3(1): 27-31 (1897-1906).

The *Balmedic*'s Whale Skull (June, 1908)

In 1931, Charles Fort wrote:

> In looking over the London *Daily News*, I came upon an item. Trawlers of the steamship *Balmedic* had brought to Grimsby the skull of an unknown monster, dredged up in the Atlantic, north of Scotland (*Daily News*, June 26, 1908). The size of the skull indicated an animal the size of an elephant, and it was in "a wonderful state of preservation." It was unlike the skull of any cetacean, having eye sockets a foot across. From the jaws hung a leathery tongue, three feet long. I found, in the *Grimsby Telegraph*, June 29th, a reproduction of a photograph of this skull, with the long tongue hanging from the beak-like jaws. I made a sketch of the skull, as pictured, and sent it with a description to the British Museum (Natural History). I received an answer from Mr. W. P. Pycraft, who wrote that he had never seen any animal with such a skull–"and I have seen a good many!" It is just possible that nobody else has ever seen anything much resembling a sketch that I'd make of anything, but that has nothing to do with descriptions of the tongue. According to Mr. Pycraft no known cetacean has such a tongue.

I was unable to obtain the original reports regarding the *Balmedic*'s skull, and thus could not examine the photographs. However, despite the possible doubt regarding a whale identity brought up by Fort, I remain convinced that the *Balmedic*'s skull was indeed that of a whale. The beak-like jaws could be explained by the elongated upper jaws of many cetaceans (Fig. 1); many whales (particularly mysticetes), despite Pycraft's assertion, have well-developed, muscular tongues (Fig. 2); and Heuvelmans (1968), who did see photographs of the skull (he cited the *Grimsby Telegraph* article in *In the Wake of the Sea Serpents*), identified it as a whale skull. Thus, all available evidence suggests that the strange skull trawled up by the *Balmedic* was in fact that of a whale.

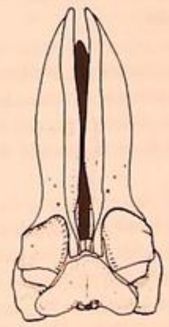

Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the skull of the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*). From Ellis (1985).

Roesch, Ben. 1999. A Review of Alleged Sea Serpent Carasses Worldwide (Part Four -- 1907-1924). *The Cryptozoology Review* 3 (3): 15-22.

Fig. 2. Right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) with mouth open, showing its prominent tongue. From Slijper (1962).

1908 (Jun) - North of Scotland - *Balmedic* = Whale

Sources: Ellis, Richard. 1985. *The Book of Whales*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf). // Fort, Charles. 1931. *Lo!* Repr. 1974 as pp. 539-839 of *The Complete Books of Charles Fort*. (New York: Dover). // Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang). // Slijper, E. J. 1962. *Whales*. (New York: Basic Books).

Sea Serpent in the Copelands? (September 5, 1908)

During the late summer of 1908, a strange eel-like creature washed up on the Copeland Islands, off Ireland's northeast coast near Belfast:

> Following the reports circulated recently as to the presence of a strange sea monster in Belfast Lough [the bay that fronts Belfast], a letter has been received from a resident on the Copeland Islands. He states that on the 5th [of September] last great excitement was caused on the islands when it became known that a huge snake-like fish had been stranded in the shoal on Horse Point.
>
> This correspondent states that he and his brother were out walking, when they observed the water in the shoal being lashed about as if by a whale. The tide was out at the time, and on approaching the spot they were amazed to see a monster fish swimming about. Too terrified to go any closer they were at a loss what to do; but at length, the correspondent, realising that the incoming tide would liberate the monster, despatched his brother for a gun, and told him to bring the boat round.
>
> "It took us all our time," he states, "to kill the beast, and it was only after four shots had been fired into him that he stopped kicking. We then grappled him, but try as we might we could not get him to budge, so John went and brought two other men and a pony, and amongst us we beached him at last." Describing his capture, our correspondent states that he measured it and found it to be nearly 30 foot [9 m] long, and about 6 feet [2 m] round at its upper fins. The body tapers to about 6 inches [15 cm] at the tail, which is fan-like. There are three large fins, two on the back and one on the belly. The mouth, nose, and eyes resemble those of a conger eel, but are about five times as large. The body is covered in scales. The writer says that he is an old man, has lived all his life on the Copelands, and has seen most queer fishes, but never anything like this. He states that if any Belfast gentleman would care to examine the monster he or any of the residents on the island would on being

> signalled for take them from Donagharlee pier to where the body is beached. He adds that he would have communicated with us sooner but for the fact that during the past two days the wather has been too wild to permit of getting across to the mainland.

There is little doubt that the Copeland Island monster was a large fish; it is tempting to identify it as an oarfish (*Regalecus glesne*). Moribund oarfish have been found washed up on beaches, thrashing around in shallow water before expiring, and the creature's size is about the same as the maximum accepted length for the oarfish. Its tapering, eel-like shape and fan-like tail match well with an oarfish identity. The fin arrangement described is somewhat strange, but it is concievable that the two fins on the back refer to the crest and body-length dorsal fin possessed by oarfish. Oarfish have a pair of slender, elongate pelvic fins near the head, whereas the Copeland beast was said to have only one fin on its belly; however, it is possible that one of the pelvic fins had been ripped off or otherwise damaged, making it less noticeable. Alternatively, it is possible that the witness confused the dorsum and venter of the fish; thus, the two pelvic fins would be the two "back" fins and the actual dorsal fin would be the "one on the belly". Another inconsistency with an oarfish identity involves the description of scales covering the body of the Copeland fish–oarfish do not have scales. However, oarfish are often covered with wart-like bony plates on the skin called tubercles, which could have been interpreted as scales.

If the Copeland fish was an oarfish, some might wonder why there was no mention of the prominent red crest and dorsal fin. I consider it possible that the crest was damaged–many stranded oarfish seem to be lacking much of this adornment–and that the oarfish had lost much of its fin colour due to its moribund state. Even in life, the oarfish's dorsal fin and crest are occasionally not bright red, as shown by the fairly transparent dorsal fins of an individual photographed off the Bahamas in 1997 (Skerry 1997).

Despite the minor discrepencies between the Copeland Island monster and *Regalecus*, I think the mere description of a elongate, eel-like fish implicates the oarfish, a species responsible for many alleged sea serpent strandings and several sea serpent sightings. It is always possible the Copeland Island creature was an unknown species of large serpentine fish, but with the available information, an oarfish identity is the most sensible.

1908 (Sept 5) - Copelands Islands, Ireland - ? = Oarfish

Sources: Anon. 1908. The sea serpent: a report from the Copelands. *The Co. Down Spectator*, September 11. // Nelson, Joseph. 1994. *Fishes of the World*, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons.) // Skerry, Brian. 1997. High-seas drifter. *BBC Wildlife* 15 (6): 64-65.

A "Huge Sea Monster" off Florida (January, 1921)

On February 12, 1921, the *New York Times* published an item regarding a "huge sea monster" found off Florida three weeks before:

> MIAMI, Fla., Feb. 12–Scientists and deep-water fishermen here are puzzled over the finding of a huge sea monster off Soldiers' Key, a few miles south of Miami, which they are unable to name. The body of the creature was found three weeks ago by Elmer E. Garretson of Huntington, L.I. [Long Island], N.Y., who today towed part of the skull to Miami. This fragment is fifteen feet [4.5 m] long and seven feet [2.1 m] wide and weighs three tons.
>
> Mr. Garretson said he did not know the length of the monster, but said he saw as much as eighty feet [24 m] of it. Sharks were devouring the flesh when he first found it. Mr. Garretson asserted that the creature evidently came up out of the deep waters of the Gulf Stream to die. About six feet [1.8 m] of the skull protruded from the water.
>
> Mr. Garretson will head a party which will try to bring the remaining portions ashore.

Considering the above account, the Soldiers' Key carcass sounds like that of a whale. Whale carcasses are occasionally found floating belly-up on the surface off coastal areas, buoyed up by their blubber and the internal build-up of gases from decomposition. Representing a large amount of easily obtained, energy-rich food for marine carnivores, they are well-attended by

sharks, including the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) and oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*). The measurements given for the Soldiers' Key carcass fit well with large balaenopterid whales such as the fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) (Fig. 3) or the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) (Fig. 4), both of which achieve normal maximum lengths of approximately 24 m (79 ft) and 26 m (85 ft), respectively (in the southern hemisphere they can reach larger sizes, probably because of increased productivity and thus more food in those regions). A rotting, scavenged carcass of one of these enormous marine mammals could quite conceivably be misidentified as some sort of huge, unknown "sea monster".

Fig. 3. Fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*). Illustration by Richard Ellis (1985).

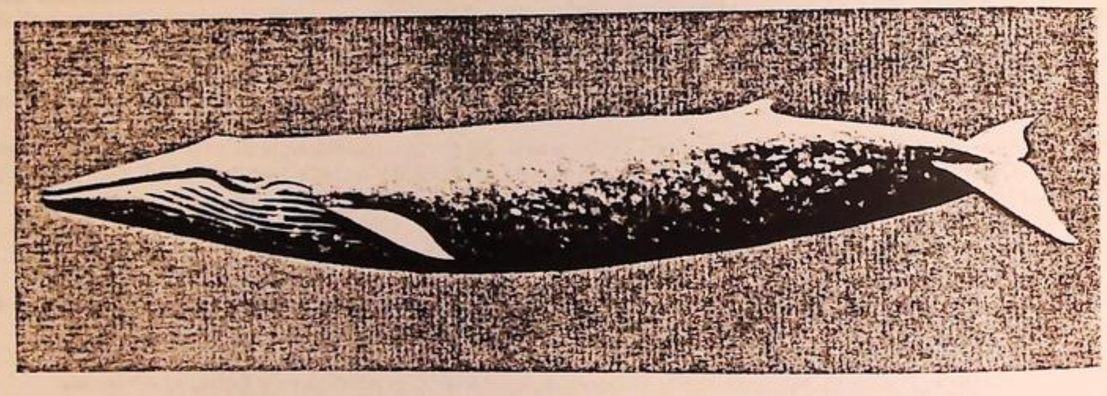

Fig. 4. Blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*). Illustration by Richard Ellis (1985).

1921 (Jan) - Soldiers' Key, Florida, U.S.A. - Elmer E. Garretson = Balaenopterid whale

Sources: Anon. 1921. Find huge sea monster. *New York Times*, Feb 13. // Ellis, Richard. 1985. *The Book of Whales*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf). // Leatherwood, Stephen and Randall R. Reeves. 1983. *The Sierra Club Handbook of Whales and Dolphins*. (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books).

The Jehu Sands "Sea Serpent" (April, 1921)

The "sea serpent" that washed ashore at Jehu Sands, about 10 to 12 miles (5 to 7 km) from Bombay, India, in April 1921, is unusual in that it was alive when found. It remained alive for 48 hours after its initial discovery, and reportedly emitted cries until it died. According to reports in British newspapers, the creature was 25 ft (7.5 m) long and had a mouth 3 ft (1 m) deep that was lined with large teeth. The ribs of the animal were visible beneath its black skin, and its eyes were said to resemble those of an elephant. The head reportedly looked like a human's.

Heuvelmans (1968) interpreted this animal as a pilot whale, and I must agree with him. He stated that one species, *Globicephalus indicus*, existed in the Indian Ocean, but this species has been since synonymized with *Globicephala macrorhynchus* (short-finned pilot whale) (Fig. 5) (van Bree, 1971), which does inhabit the northern Indian Ocean.

This identification fits well with all the details of the Jehu Sands animal. First of all, pilot whales are well known for their stranding behaviour, usually while still alive (though multiple pilot whales usually strand at one time). Pilot whales, like all cetaceans, are able to emit some sounds audible to the human ear (as well as sounds imperceivable to humans), which could explain the Jehu Sands animal's cries. The 3 ft deep mouth is also compatible. Pilot whales have large, conical teeth that could easily account for the Jehu Sands animal's teeth. Pilot whales are jet black. The Jehu Sands creature's elephant-like eyes can be accounted for by the small beady eyes possessed by pilot whales. Finally, pilot whales have a large melon (the bulbous structure on the foreheads of all odontocetes), which might suggest an association with a human head.

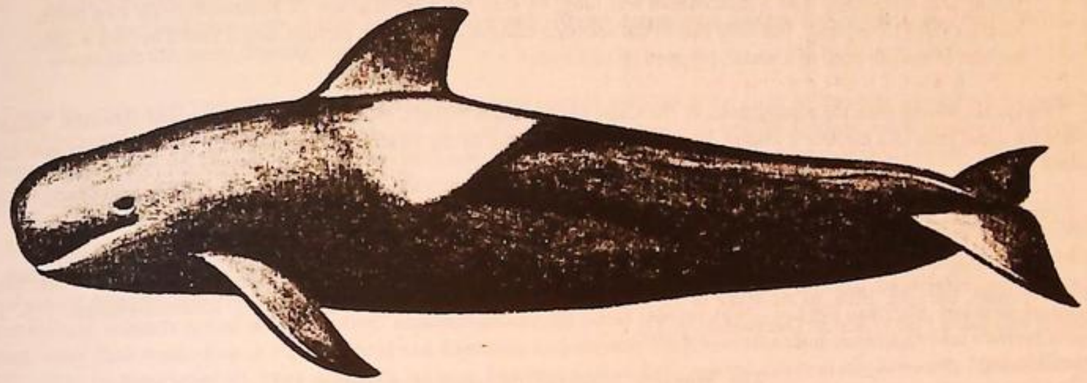

Fig. 5. Short-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*). Illustration by Richard Ellis (1989).

The only problem with a short-finned pilot whale identity is that the maximum known length for this species is 5.4 m (18 ft) in males (Leatherwood and Reeves, 1983), a full 2 m shorter than the Jehu Sands animal. However, this is probably a conservative figure, as another reliable source cites the maximum length for *G. macrorhynchus* as 6.1 m (Waller, 1996), and Leatherwood and Reeves (1983) themselves state that the maximum "may differ regionally." Considering that all of the other traits of the Jehu Sands animal correspond so well with *G. macrorhynchus*, the minor discrepancy in length can be ignored and I think one can safely state that a short-finned pilot whale definitely offers the most convincing identification for this "sea serpent."

1921 (Apr) - Jehu Sands, Bombay, India - ? = Short-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*)

Sources: van Bree, P.J.H. 1971. On *Globicephala sieboldii* Gray, 1846, and other species of Pilot Whales (Notes on Cetacea, Delphinoidea III). *Beaufortia* 19: 79-87. // Ellis, Richard. 1989. *Dolphins and Porpoises*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf). // Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang), p. 406. // Leatherwood, Stephen and Randall R. Reeves. 1983. *The Sierra Club Handbook of Whales and Dolphins*. (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books). // Waller, Geoffrey (ed.). 1996. *SeaLife*. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press).

A Carcass from Cape May (November, 1921)

In his book *Battles with Giant Fish*, F.A. Mitchell-Hedges wrote:

> [I]n November 1921, off Cape May, a great beast was washed ashore. This mammal, whose weight was estimated at over 15 tons ... was visited by many scientists, who were unable to place it, and positively stated that nothing yet known to Science could in any way compare with it.

> The photographs which were published in many newspapers showed that this modern leviathan somewhat resembled the elephant–in fact, it could be best described as a sea-elephant, but of huge proportions.

I was unable to uncover the original newspaper reports and the photographs, but Charles Fort (1931) also wrote about the carcass:

> I investigated the story of the Cape May monster, wherever I got the idea that I could find out anything in particular.
>
> Somebody in Cape May wrote to me that the thing was a highly undesirable carcass of a whale, which had been towed out to sea. Somebody else wrote to me that it was a monster with a tusk twelve feet [3.6 m] long, which he had seen. He said that, if I'd like to have it, he'd send me a photograph of the monster. After writing of having seen something with a tusk twelve feet long, he sent me a photograph of something with two tusks, each six feet [1.8 m] long. But only one of the seeming tusks is clear in the picture, and it could be, not a tusk, but part of the jaw bone of a whale, propped up tuskwise.

Despite not having seen the photographs of the Cape May carcass myself, Fort's conclusions are sensible (the "tusks" are surely the upper jaws of a mysticete whale). Heuvelmans (1968) came to the same conclusion, listing the Cape May carcass as a baleen whale.

1921 (Nov) - Cape May, New Jersey, USA - ? = Mysticete whale

Sources: Fort, Charles. 1931. *Lo!* Repr. 1974 as pp. 539-839 of *The Complete Books of Charles Fort*. (New York: Dover). // Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang). // Mitchell-Hedges, F.A. 1923. *Battles with Giant Fish*. (London: Duckworth), p. 22.

The Margate Monster (November 2, 1922)

One of the most unusual of alleged sea serpent carcasses ever reported is the white, furry beast that apparently washed ashore at Margate Beach, South Africa in 1922. Michell & Rickard (1982) provide a good narrative of the creature's strange appearance:

> On the morning of 1 November 1922, Hugh Ballance looked out to sea from the beach at Margate, in Natal (South Africa), where he had recently bought a farm. A disturbance out to sea caught his attention, and through his glasses he thought he saw "two whales fighting with some sea monster" which looked like a huge polar bear. According to a statement he made to a local newspaper, cited in the *Daily Mail* (27 December 1924), Ballance said: "This creature I observed to rear out of the water fully 20 feet [6 m] and to strike repeatedly with what I took to be its tail at the two whales, but with seemingly no effect." The battle continued for several hours watched by growing crowds on the beach. Eventually the whales moved away leaving the strange giant floating without a sign of life. That night the carcass drifted ashore on a beach near the aptly named Tragedy Hill. The body was colossal and spread out upon beaching, as do all large sea creatures without their natural element to support their bulk. It was 47 feet [14 m] long, 10 feet [3 m] wide and 5 feet [1.5 m] high. It had a 10-foot-long tail, matched at the other end by a curious trunk-like appendage. "Where the head should have been," said Ballance, "the creature had a sort of trunk 14 inches [35 cm] in diameter and about five foot [1.5 m] long, the end being like the snout of a pig." But the most astonishing feature of the monter, which could be seen clearly from the beach during the previous day's battle, was its impressive fur or hair covering, "eight inches [20 cm] long and exactly like a polar bear's, and snow white." There was no sign of any wound or blood stains. For ten days it lay there on the beach, attracting sightseers and flies, until the stench became intolerable. A team of 32 oxen failed to move it far and abandoned it near the water's edge, from where the night tide wafted it back into unknown depths.

Researchers who have examined the case of the Margate carcass have had difficulty explaining it. Michell & Rickard (1982) wrote: "Even minds of our practised elasticity find difficulty in accomadating polar bears 47 feet long washed up on tropical beaches." They came to no firm conclusions about the incident, but thought that the "trunk" might have been the neck of a

creature. The white hair mystified them most. Although they recognized that during decomposition of whale and shark carcasses the connective fibres in tissues produce a whitish, fibrous hair, they did not think that this could explain the seemingly luxuriant pelt of the Margate carcass.

Shuker (1995) also mentioned the "fur" of decomposing whale and shark carcasses, but thought it unapplicable to the Margate carcass because of Hugh Ballance's story: simply put, the carcass had been dead only one day, and would not have any appreciable signs of decomposition.

Both Heuvelmans (1968) and Fort (1931) had little to say about the carcass. Heuvelmans came to no conclusion as to the creature's possible identity. Fort notes a different date (October 25, 1924) for the incident and may have been thrown off by an inaccurate newspaper report (Michell & Rickard 1982). Regardless, he writes:

> I won't go into this, because I consider it a worthless yarn. In accordance with my methods, considering this a foolish and worthless yarn, I sent out letters to South African newspapers, calling upon readers, who could, to investigate this story. Nobody answered.

I tend to agree with Fort. The description of the Margate carcass does not come close to matching any known (or supposed unknown) animal, and if such a creature did exist, it would surprise me greatly if–with its fantastic white pelage–it has avoided detection for so long. As Michell & Rickard (1982) note, hair or fur is very uncommon on large aquatic animals. On the grounds of zoological implausibility alone I would disregard the entire case.

I think it is possible that the entire story was a newspaper hoax, which were relatively common at the time of the incident. Or, perhaps Hugh Ballance's sighting of the fight between the Margate creature and the two whales was invented, inspired by the actual appearance of a real carcass on Margate Beach. After all, the carcass does sound a lot like a very decomposed shark or whale. It particularly reminds me of the "globsters" reported around the world (Moore 1996). In 1997 and 1998, two huge masses of rotting, hairy flesh washed up in New Zealand and Tasmania, respectively. They were identified as rotting whale blubber (Roesch 1998). Also, on September 30, 1944 a 30 ft (9 m) long, headless mass of flesh washed ashore at Machrihanish, Mull of Kintyre, Scotland. A report in the London *Daily Mail* (October 5, 1944) described the remains as those of a polar bear, because of its "long white fur". This comparison to a polar bear instantly brings to mind the Margate creature. Unfortunately, no one examined the Machrihanish carcass, but a photograph was taken and is included in Wood (1982). The photograph shows a largely amorphous mass of white flesh which greatly resembles the masses of rotting whale flesh from Tasmania and New Zealand.

Another possibility is that the entire Margate carcass story is true, but perhaps the fight Ballance observed was actually a feeding frenzy by sharks, and other marine animals (possibly orcas [*Orcinus orca*]?), on a decomposing whale or shark carcass, which later washed ashore. Or, perhaps the supposed fight was actually play--whales are inquisitive and playful creatures who are often interested in strange objects. (Recently, a megamouth shark [*Megachasma pelagios*] was seen being harassed–or possibly played with–by three sperm whales [*Physeter catadon*] near the surface off North Sulawesi, Indonesia [Pietro Pecchioni, Internet post].) A decomposing whale or shark carcass might provide an interesting plaything for a couple of sperm whales, and Ballance might have mistaken their play for predatory action.

Obviously, it is hard to say which–if any–of these theories is actually correct. I am reasonably sure, however, that the Margate carcass does not represent a new species of animal. It is simply too much to believe.

1922 (Nov 2) - Margate, Natal, South Africa - ? = ?

Sources: Fort, Charles. 1931. *Lo!* Repr. 1974 as pp. 539-839 of *The Complete Books of Charles Fort*. (New York: Dover). // Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang), pp. 596-97. // Michell, John & Robert Rickard. 1982. *Living Wonders*. (London: Thames & Hudson). // Miller, Penny. 1979. Myths and Legends of Southern Africa. (). // Moore, John. 1996. What are the globsters? *The Cryptozoology Review* 1 (1): 20-29. // Roesch, Ben S. 1998. A compendium of cryptids. *The Cryptozoology Review* 2 (3): 4-14. // Shuker, K.P.N. 1995. Bring me the head of the sea serpent! *Strange* 15: 12-17. // Wood, Gerald. 1982. *The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats*, 3rd ed. (Middlesex, U.K.: Guinness Superlatives).

Unidentified in Tuamotus (before 1924)

In his 1968 tome, Heuvelmans includes a sea serpent sighting by Ernest Davies, a British trader who lived on Tuamotus in the South Pacific during the first half of the century. At the end of his account, Davies writes:

> A short time afterwards I heard from a reliable source that a sea-serpent had been cast up by a tidal wave on a reef some distance off. It measured 53 ft [16 m] in length, and had a girth of twelve feet [3.6 m].

Nothing can be reliably deduced from this account. Heuvelmans wrote: "I have not been able to find out anything about this washed-up sea-serpent. But, considering how many carcases have proved to be known whales or sharks, little has probably been lost." My opinion is the same.

1924 (before) - Tuamotus, South Pacific - ? = ?

Sources: Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. (New York: Hill and Wang), p. 413.

Summary Listing

Legend: Date - Location - Witness(es) - Length (meters, rounded off) = Probable Identity

1908 (Jun) - North of Scotland - *Balmedic* - ? = Whale's skull
1908 (Sept 5) - Copelands Islands, Ireland - ? = Oarfish
1921 (Jan) - Soldiers' Key, Florida, U.S.A. - Elmer E. Garretson - ?24 m = Balaenopterid whale
1921 (Apr) - Jehu Sands, Bombay, India - ? - 8 m = Short-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*)
1921 (Nov) - Cape May, New Jersey, USA - ? - ? = Mysticete Whale
1922 (November 1) - Margate, Natal, South Africa - ? - ? = ?
1924 (before) - Tuamotus, South Pacific - ? - 16 m = ?

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Richard Martin, John Moore, Richard Muirhead, and Darren Naish for clippings, comments and criticisms.

Some Chinese Cryptids (Part One)

by Richard Muirhead

The Chinese wildman or yeren is well known among cryptozoologists, but Chinese scholars have noted many other animals over the centuries, many of which have received little cryptozoological attention. Nearly four hundred years ago, Wang Chi and his son Wang Si Yi included in their encyclopedia *San Cai Tu Hui* (1607) a bovid named the "Ling" (Fig. 1) that was only recently recognized by scientists (MacDonald and Yang 1997). This species was discovered in Vietnam and Cambodia, and dubbed *Pseudonovibos spiralis*.It is known as the *Linh Duong* in Vietnam and the *Khting Sipu* in Cambodia.

The Dragon Book (Edwards 1943), a collection of Chinese lore and knowledge, contains mention of a few fascinating mystery creatures. Unfortunately, many of the accounts are undated. There are the *Ch'uan-T'ou* people (Fig. 2a). They have human heads, bat-like wings, and bird's beaks. They live on raw fish. Then there are the *Hsing-Hsing* (Fig. 2b). They are like monkeys with white faces and pointed ears, and can walk upright and climb trees. Also mentioned in *The Dragon Book* are the *Hua Fish* or flying-snake fish (Fig. 2c), which has the wings of a bird but looks like a fish. The musical serpent has four wings and the head of a snake. It makes a noise like the "musical stone", but the musical stone is not identified. Finally, there is the sky horse (Fig. 2d), which "looks like a white dog with a black head. It has fleshy wings and is able to fly."

The Vermilion Bird (Schafer 1967) is a record of the life and ecology of South-West China and North-East Vietnam during the T'ang dynasty (618 A.D. to 907 A.D.). Several mythical or semi-mythical animals are mentioned in the chapter on animals. Chang Pin's undated *Hsi yu jen Jih-nan hui* is quoted from (Schafer 1967: 206), mentioning flying snakes and poisonous birds:

> In a wilderness of gorges, poisonous birds
> come pecking after the boat;
> By the blackness of caverns, vindictive
> snakes come flying from the trees.

Flying snakes are documented in the cryptozoological and fortean literature (Shuker 1996); whether they exist or not is a matter of opinion. Poisonous birds do exist: the hooded pitohui (*Pitohui dichrous*) has poisonous feathers. This fact was discovered in Papua New Guinea in 1991 by John Dumbacher, a student at the University of Chicago (Anon. 1992). Then in 1995 the variable pitohiu was also found to be poisonous. The bird lives in north-west Papua New Guinea. Ornithologist Phil Gregory discovered the poisonous nature of the feathers by licking them. When he did so, his mouth tingled and went numb (Anon. 1995). The language of the above poem suggests that the poison of those T'ang dynasty birds may have been in their bills.

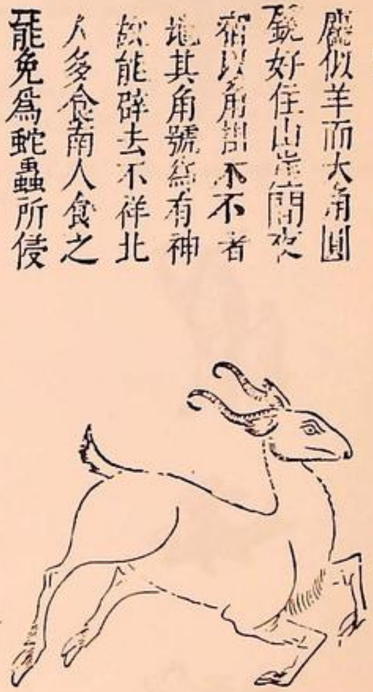

Fig. 1. Text and illustration of the "Ling". From the *San Cai Tu Hiu* by Wang Chi and Wang Si Yi (1607).

Apparently, there was a type of giant crab on the shores of the South China Sea which when eight months old could fight with a tiger. It was called the *chiu-mou*, and grew to over 1 ft (0.3 m) in length.

Muirhead, Richard. 1999. Some Chinese Cryptids (Part One). *The Cryptozoology Review* 3 (3): 23-25.

In 745 A.D., a giant "centipede" washed ashore near Canton. No further information is available, which is unfortunate because the report brings to mind the mysterious *con rit* carcass that appeared on a beach in Vietnam in 1883 (Heuvelmans 1968; Roesch 1998).

Downes & Muirhead, in an unpublished manuscript on Hong Kong's mystery animals, have information from the *Hong Kong Naturalist* and various Hong Kong newspapers about a "many legged snake" found there around 1908 (see also Downes & Muirhead 1998). This may have actually been a large centipede.

When Ho Lu-kuang was chief administrator of the Kwangtung region of South China during the mid eighth century A.D., creatures like giant toads allegedly inhabited an offshore island. Their breath was said to be "brighter than moonlight."

According to Schafer (1967: 224-225) one T'ang source tells of black elephants with small pink tusks inhabiting the Hsun and Lei districts. This corresponds to Leizhou Bandao (the Leizhou Peninsuls, opposite Hainan island) and south-east Guangxi province. Natives caught these elephants with poison arrows and roasted their trunks as a delicacy.

Schafer (1967: 226) also quotes from a poem that mentions giant turtles:

> Startled by fire, the elephants of the mountains emerge;
> Struck by thunder, the giant turtles of the ocean dive.

This poem is from the work *Ch'uan T'ang shih*. Admittedly, the giant turtles of the poem may have been a species of sea turtle, some of which can get very large. The

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

Fig. 2. Fanciful drawings of: (a) Ch'uan-T'ou people. (b) Hsing-Hsing. (c) Hua-fish. (d) Sky-horse. From Edwards (1943).

Fig. 3. Chinese Hill Mynah (*Gracula religiosa*). Illustration by Michel Kleinbaum, from Schauensee (1989).

leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coricea*) is the largest sea turtle, reaching over 2 m [6 ft] in length and weights of over 800 kg [1800 lb] (Bright 1989; Pough et al. 1998).

Schafer (1967: 239) tells of parrots with turquoise collars and vermilion beaks "which could speak and sing like men" but "they cannot be identified with certainty now." Finally, in south or south-west China there were "red and white mutants" of the usually black Chinese Hill Mynah (*Gracula religiosa*) (Fig. 2) (Schafer 1967: 244).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Darren Naish for providing the article by MacDonald and Yang.

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Probable Sighting of a Silver Pheasant (*Lophura nycthemera*) in South-Western England

by Darren Naish

On the 27th October 1998, during a train journey from Southampton to Exeter, I caught sight of an unusual and distinctive bird that I was not able to identify. The bird was very similar to a Common Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), but was entirely white, excepting the crown, which was entirely black (Fig. 1). Like *Phasianus* and many other phasianid taxa, it had elongate, gently curving uppertail coverts. These were about the same length as the total length of the body. I am unsure how many coverts were present but there were at least two. The bird was foraging in a field where light-coloured grasses appeared to grow to about 10-15 cm (4-6 inches) in height. Consequently, only the dorsal half of the bird was visible over the top of the grass (Fig. 1). The field itself was immediately adjacent to the strip by the railway and the bird would have been about 10 m (30 ft) from my position in the train. I was able to observe the bird for about 5 seconds, and feel that this was more than enough time to observe it keenly and construct a detailed understanding of its appearance.

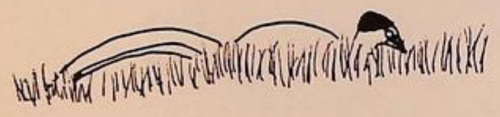

Fig. 1. Sketch of pheasant-like bird seen by author. Illustration by Darren Naish.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide precise locality data as I was unfamiliar with the area through which the train was travelling. I was not able to record, nor am I able to recollect, the name of the nearest town or city. The sighting can at best be pinned down to southwest England, between Southampton and Exeter. As this account is not in any way a newsworthy or significant one, I do not feel that this is too important.

The bird was clearly a pheasant (Galliformes, Phasianidae), as evidenced by its large body size (comparable to *Phasianus colchicus*), posture, elongate tail feathers and behaviour (terrestrial foraging in arable land). Despite its white colouration, the dark head proves that it was not an albino. A number of possible identities for this animal are available, seeing as feral or escapee phasianids of many kinds are common and widespread in the British Isles. One identity in particular, however, immediately springs to mind: that of the Silver pheasant (*Lophura nycthemera*), a grassland inhabitant of southern China, Myanmar, Indochina and Hainan (1). Though *L. nycthemera* is a variable species (as many as 14 subspecific names have been created), the best known and most widely exported variation, that typically regarded as the subspecies *L. n. nycthemera* (2) (Fig. 2), conforms well to the English bird described above.

Rutgers (3) reported that individuals of *L. nycthemera* have long been imported to Europe and that they were bred there as long ago as the Eighteenth Century. Lever (4) noted that *L. nycthemera* was first introduced to England as early as 1740 and that the species had become naturalized 'in a number of districts' soon after this date. This is intriguing if accurate as it means that *L. nycthemera* has therefore been a possible denizen of the British Isles for far longer than is generally thought. Further introductions of this species at Woburn in Bedfordshire in the 1890s and at Richmond Park in Surrey in 1928-9 (the latter reported to be unsuccessful) are also on record (4). It is therefore quite likely that *L. nycthemera* might be observed in the wild in southern England today, and therefore some credence is lent to the possibility of this identity applying to the animal I observed. In March 1999 I visited and observed the collection of *L. nycthemera* on display at Portsmouth Park Aviary, Portsmouth. Two males are among this collection. Taking into account the fact that I did not observe the very dark underbelly of this species in the specimen I observed in the field (because it was foraging in grass), the similarity of these *L. nycthemera* males to the bird figured in Fig. 1 was convincing enough for me to believe that this is the species I observed.

Naish, Darren. 1999. Probable sighting of a Silver Pheasant (*Lophura nycthemera*) in South-Western England. *The Cryptozoology Review* 3 (3): 26-27.

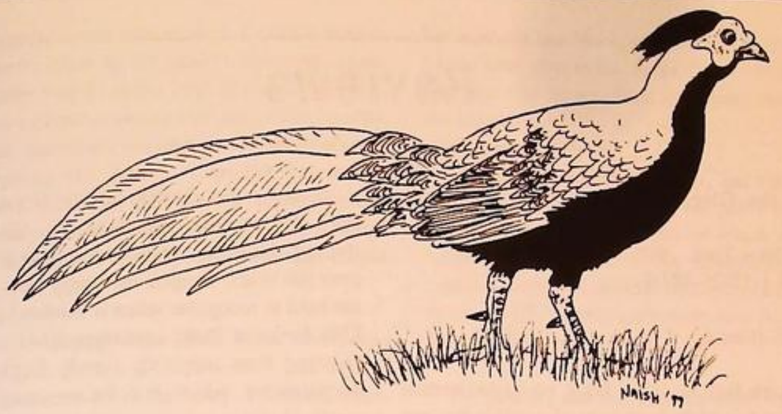

Fig. 2. Silver pheasant (*Lophura. n. nycthemera*). Illustration by Darren Naish.

However, if this identification is correct, it means that feral individuals of *L. nycthemera* are possibly present in southwestern England (the location of my sighting) as well as in the southeast. It would be interesting if this species has been reported from the former area in the ornithological literature.

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Reviews

The Search for the Giant Squid
by Richard Ellis
The Lyons Press, New York, 1998, 322 pp., hardcover, $35.00 (US), ISBN 1-55821-689-8.

Reviewed by Ben S. Roesch.

It is odd to think that an entire book could be written about an animal that has never been seen alive. This has not phased Richard Ellis, however, who has continued his tradition of impressive marine natural history books (including *The Book of Sharks*, *The Book of Whales*, and *Monsters of the Sea*) with an excellent new tome about the world's only certifiable sea monster—the giant squid (*Architeuthis* spp.).

The book is not solely about *Architeuthis*. An understanding of *Architeuthis* requires an understanding of squids, spineless yet complex creatures. In one of the early chapters Ellis concisely draws together a large amount of material, covering the in's and out's of squid anatomy, behaviour and biology. This chapter contains one of the very few errors in the book: the illustration of an *Architeuthis* beak (p. 39) shows the upper half of the beak to be the larger than the lower, like a parrot's; in reality, the lower is the larger, as Ellis correctly notes in the text.

Though the giant squid is not strictly cryptozoological, it is probably responsible for some sightings of sea serpents, Ellis argues. He largely reiterates the points and examples he raised in his book *Monsters of the Sea* (1995), but adds a few more cases to show his point. While he seems slightly less adamant this time around, Ellis sticks with his theory. To me, it certainly appears likely that a number of sea serpent sightings are in fact those of giant squid, creatures strange and monstrous enough to evoke images of sea serpents in the minds of those who have seen it. Some of the alleged sea serpent sightings that Ellis explains as giant squid don't convince me as easily, however. His interpretation of the *Valhalla* sea serpent, observed off Brazil in 1905 by two naturalists, requires us to believe that a giant squid was swimming on its side near the surface, with one tentacle and one half of its tail fin sticking out of the water. It seems more unlikely that a giant squid would do this than to unquestionably call the *Valhalla* creature a sea serpent! As Ellis notes, however, we know so little about the giant squid that we cannot say that it does not do this.

Such is the mystery of *Architeuthis*. The creature has a long and convoluted taxonomy, Ellis shows, as he wades through the many species attributed to the genus *Architeuthis* over the years. Despite its messy taxonomy, the giant squid is not hard to recognize when it washes up on beaches worldwide. Ellis looks at these carcasses from a historical perspective, showing how scientists slowly began to learn more about *Architeuthis*, which had for so many years been considered mythical.

Even today, however, little is known about *Architeuthis*, but this allows Ellis to incorporate every detail of what we do know about its biology into his book. We learn about baby giant squids, such as a tiny individual with a mantle length of only 1 cm netted off Australia in 1981; the reproduction of the giant squid, including the male's hypodermic sperm transfer system; the debate about whether the giant squid is sluggish or an active, voracious creature (much to the chagrin of monster-lovers, the former appears most likely); and many other facets of *Architeuthis*' biology.

One of the most vivid sea stories is that of the giant squid and the sperm whale locked in combat, but in reality, Ellis explains, the combat is not much of a contest, as the sperm whale always takes the prize. Furthermore, sperm whales usually eat smaller squids, with *Architeuthis* comprising only a fraction of its diet. A few of these squids, some quite large themselves, are discussed, including the fabulous *Taningia danae*, a deep-water, 7-foot-long "winged" demon of a squid, with large eyes, hooked suckers, and a pair of "stroboscopic arm flashers". It is a fantastic creature, but not as fantastic as the claims, which Ellis reasonably discounts in this chapter, of huge *Architeuthis* sucker marks found on the carcasses of sperm whales taken by whaling ships.

Because of its monstrous nature and its prominence in myth, it is not surprising that the giant squid has a rich literary and cinematic career, upon which Ellis bases a witty, sarcastic chapter. He exposes the errors and inherent silliness of many interpretations of *Architeuthis* in the media, from Jules Vernes to Peter Benchley, and from *Reap the Wild Wind* to the recent TV movie *Beast*. Also in this chapter are reports of ship-sinking giant squid, giant giant squids—that is, over the accepted maximum length of 18 m--and other cryptozoological accounts said to be true. Ellis takes a skeptical standpoint on many of the reports, and rightly so, as they often seem unbelievable or unlikely.

Architeuthis' impressiveness has made it a desirable item for museums and zoos. Due to its rarity, however, these institutions have usually had to settle with life sized models. After tracing the history of these various models, Ellis finishes with a conclusion that questions the skeptical viewpoint that he maintains throughout the book. A useful, referenced appendix is provided that lists all known sightings and strandings of giant squid. Also included is an extensive bibliography, which lists nearly every paper, book and article ever published on *Architeuthis*.

There is very little wrong with Ellis' book. At some points the author's style seems a little loose, and tighter editing could have removed some redundancy. These are minor points, however, that take little away from Ellis' enjoyable prose, which is nicely supplemented by many beautiful illustrations, several by the author. Ellis is to be commended for his excellent research, apparent throughout the book. *The Search for the Giant Squid* is a well written, useful and interesting work that pays tribute to one of the world's last monsters.

Dinosaurs of Australia and New Zealand, and other Animals of the Mesozoic Era
by John A. Long
Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1998, 188 pp., hardcover, $39.95 (US), ISBN 0-674-20767-X.

Reviewed by Ben S. Roesch.

The atmosphere surrounding dinosaur paleontology in Australia and New Zealand today is not unlike that fostered in the western United States in the last century. In this opulently illustrated volume, Aussie paleontologist John Long provides a look at the ancient vertebrates of Australia and New Zealand, many of which have been discovered only recently.

The first part of the book, called "The Study and Discovery of Dinosaurs", gives an excellent background to the basics of paleontology and geology, as well as a history of Australian paleontology and up-to-date details about dinosaur phylogeny and evolution.

There are three subsequent sections in the book, each examining vertebrate life in the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous, respectively. Each section is arranged taxonomically, with in-depth entries for all taxonomic designations down to the species level of fossil vertebrates of Australia and New Zealand. This format makes Long's book an extremely useful reference.

One of the things I like best about this book is that it's not just about dinosaurs. Dinosaurs were awesome creatures, but many other Mesozoic animals were equally fascinating. Long also discusses amphibians, reptiles (including the fantastic marine reptiles), pterosaurs, birds, and mammals of the Mesozoic.

Long is an excellent writer, and the text is readable and interesting. Complimenting his prose are numerous photos, paintings and other illustrations which add immensely to the value of this book. Some illustrations are of fossilized remains, others of skeletal reconstructions, and still others are beautiful life portraits, showing how the extinct animals may have looked when alive.

A glossary and index are provided; both are useful additions to the book. In-text references are present, and there is an excellent bibliography.

Well-written, informative and well-illustrated, *Dinosaurs of Australia and New Zealand* compiles and conveys a large body of information about the fascinating animals of the Australian Mesozoic.

North America's Great Ape: the Sasquatch
by John Bindernagel
Beachcomber Books, Courtenay, British Columbia, 1998, 270 pp., softcover, $25.00 (CAN), ISBN 0-9682887-0-7.

Reviewed by Ben S. Roesch.

The question of whether the sasquatch or bigfoot exists is a controversial topic in cryptozoology. In this book, Dr. John Bindernagel, a Canadian wildlife biologist, has chosen to avoid this question. His opinion is that the sasquatch probably does exist, and he treats the sasquatch as if it were a known animal, focusing on its habits, behaviour, and biology.

Bindernagel presents a reasonable, sane, and intelligent picture of the possible lifestyle of the sasquatch. The book makes for enjoyable reading, being well-written, succinct and interesting. The chapters are short but numerous, and are grouped in different parts, examining anatomy, physical evidence, feeding habits, behaviour, and other topics. One of the parts compares our knowledge of the sasquatch to what we know about the great apes. The similarities are fascinating and sometimes surprising. No one has compared the sasquatch to the great apes like Bindernagel has; this, along with the examination of the sasquatch from a biological point of view, make his book a refreshing break from the typical bigfoot fare. Several appendices are provided, with more analysis of sasquatch biology and behaviour in context of the great apes, as well as analysis of anatomy and other topics.

The text is well supplemented by photographs and

illustrations. Extensive end notes are provided, and full references are included at the end of the book. A glossary and index are also present.

As one is reading the book, it is easy to forget that the sasquatch is an unknown animal. The evidence is compelling, and Bindernagel is persuasive in his arguments. Still, I am somewhat reluctant to accept a biological study of an animal that is not definitively known to exist. It is hard enough uncovering the secrets of the lives of many known animals, such as grizzly bears and white sharks, much less an unknown North American primate. With that in mind, however, Bindernagel's book is thoroughly enjoyable and many of the ideas he presents are interesting to ponder. Certainly, *North America's Great Ape: the Sasquatch* is one of the best books on the subject that I have read in some time. It is definitely a valuable addition to any cryptozoologist's library.

(This book can be ordered direct from Beachcomber Books, Box 3286, Courtenay BC, Canada V9N 5N4 for $25.00 plus $3.00 shipping [Canadian funds]. You can order over the phone too: 1-800-487-1494.)

Herpetology
by F. Harvey Pough, Robin M. Andrews, John E. Cadle, Martha L. Crump, Alan H. Savitzky, Kentwood D. Wells (eds.)
Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1998, 577 pp., hardcover, $80.00 (US), ISBN 0-13-850876-3.

Reviewed by Ben S. Roesch.

Most people don't realize the diversity of reptiles and amphibians; the "fabulous fur-balls" (to use Robert Bakker's phrase) are simply much more popular than "slimy", slow-moving frogs and snakes. Today, there are about 6 000 reptile species and 4 600 amphibians. On the other hand, there are 4 000 and 9 000 extant species of mammals and birds, respectively. This book is a fascinating, extremely informative and well-illustrated look at the maligned reptiles and amphibians.

In their preface, the editors write that their book is meant not as a reference book but as a textbook. They assume the reader has the background given by a course in vertebrate zoology, though they add that they have tried to explain technical jargon in many cases, so as not to confuse and distract the reader. Despite the editors' assertions, I think the book is extremely useful as an accurate, information-rich reference book, serving as much more than just a university textbook. Coverage of topics is highly comprehensive, not being just another exposé on reptile and amphibian anatomy and physiology. These topics are included with excellent detail, but the editors have succeeded in also examining reptiles and amphibians in an evolutionary and ecological light. There are excellent chapters on paleontology and evolution, as well as feeding and reproductive biology, many aspects of ecology and behaviour etc. Classification and distribution of reptiles and amphibians is covered in two fabulous chapters, with excellent coverage down to families, and including lists of genera and numbers of species.) All topics are highly detailed and well explained, and references are supplied throughout. An exhaustive, very useful bibliography is included at the end of the book.

Many black and white illustrations (photos, line drawings, etc.) nicely supplement explanations and discussions in the text. The overall design and layout is attractive. Two well done indices are provided: one of authors and one of subjects.

Herpetology is a wonderful, extremely useful addition to the herpetological literature, and is, in my mind, the best, most up-to-date reference to this fascinating topic available. I greatly recommend it to all.

The Simon & Schuster Encyclopedia of Animals
by Philip Whitfield (General Consultant)
Simon & Schuster, New York, New York, 1998, 616 pp., hardcover, $50.00 (US), ISBN 0-684-85237-3.

Reviewed by Ben S. Roesch.

It is quite sobering to think that this massive 600 page book includes entries for only about 2000 vertebrate species–a mere 4% of the world total of 45 000. However, *The Simon & Schuster Encyclopedia of Animals* is an admirable effort to catalogue as many of these species as can be included in an affordable, accessible book.

The book is arranged taxonomically, with the five major sections covering mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fishes. Within these sections, information on all families is included, with specific accounts on representative species. (An unfortunate but understandable exception to this is the fishes section--there are so many fish families that coverage was limited to orders, and important families.) Species and family accounts are concise, yet informative, including facts on size, breeding habits, behaviour, feeding biology, conservation status, distribution and more. The text is written by scientists, and is highly accurate. (One error I noticed was the mention that "more than 45,000 or so known species of vertebrate animals are fishes"–in fact there are 45 000 species of vertebrates, of which about 24 000 are fishes.) I would have liked to have seen more detail in the text, but because of the massive scope of this book, the level of information included is understandable. As it stands, the text is accurate, useful, well-written and accessible.

Each species is illustrated with colour paintings. The illustrations are excellent and detailed, and add greatly to the beautiful layout and design of the book.

The magnificent diversity of vertebrate life deserves a beautifully illustrated, informative and excellent reference; considering the great extent of such a task, *The Simon & Schuster Encyclopedia of Animals* achieves this goal rather well.

In Deeper Waters: Photographic Studies of Hawaiian Deep-Sea Habitats and Life-Forms
by E.H. Chave and Alexander Malahoff.
University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 1998, 128 pp., softcover, $19.95 (US), ISBN 0-8248-2003-7.

Reviewed by Ben S. Roesch.

Since 1965, the Hawai'i Undersea Research Laboratory (HURL) at the University of Hawai'i has been exploring the deep waters off the Hawaiian Islands using deep-water submersibles. *In Deeper Waters* is a result of this on-going project, presenting a well-illustrated survey of the geology and organisms of this area.

The book is beautiful, with an attractive layout and many photographs of geological features and spectacular deep-sea animals. My favourite photo is probably that of a ghostly, 3 m long octopus (*Cirroteuthis* sp.) hovering over the rocky bottom at 1300 m (p. 57). Due to my ichthyological bias, I especially liked the shots of rare deep-sea fishes and sharks; one shows a tan goosefish (*Sladenia remiger*) perched atop a rock formation, glaring with a humourous and seemingly surprised look at the viewer (p. 75). A host of bizarre invertebrates are pictured as well, such as slug-like holothurians (sea cucumbers) and glass rope sponges standing like sentries on the sea floor (pp. 49 and 30, respectively). Each photo caption includes the common and scientific names and size of the animal(s) pictured, as well as notes on substrate and depth. Overall, the photos are a little small, and the resolution of some of them could be better, but they are still spectacular. After all, taking photos in the deep-sea is not easy.

The illustrations are nicely supplemented by an informative and readable text, which comments on most of the photos (including occasional anecdotes on how the photos were obtained), with interesting and pertinent background information tossed in. The chapters on deep-sea ecology and deep-sea animals, which make up the bulk of the book, are especially interesting; the latter is organized taxonomically, from sponges to fishes. I would have liked to have seen more detail in the text, but as a popular book the book succeeds. If one wants to learn more, *In Deeper Waters* has a bibliography, and references are provided throughout the text.

The book ends with a useful 33 page table listing all animals recorded by HURL submersibles. Besides locality, depth, substrate and other details, references are provided for each.

In Deeper Waters is an interesting, beautiful and well-illustrated look at deep-sea animals and geology, rarely seen by human eyes.

PERIODICALS

Crypto
Editor: Craig Heinselman.
135 Elm St., Apt 81, Milford, NH 03055 USA. Free.
Quarterly.

This is a new publication from cryptozoologist Craig Heinselman. It contains cryptozoology news, as well as some short articles, reviews and discussion of fiction with cryptozoological content. Each issue is printed out on a colour printer, which enables the editor to include some nice colour illustrations. — BSR

End Page

Contributors for this Issue

Richard Muirhead is a MA student at Oxford Brookes University living in Macclesfield, Cheshire, U.K. His interests are folklore, natural history and writing children's stories. He hopes to look for the rumoured sabre-toothed tiger in Chad in 2000. He can be contacted at richard@mfield25.freeserve.co.uk

Darren Naish is a zoologist based at the University of Portsmouth, UK, where he is currently studying predatory dinosaurs from the Early Cretaceous. He continues to work on other areas of special interest---namely, the cryptozoology of whales and the natural history and evolution of Mesozoic and Cenozoic tetrapods.

Ben S. Roesch is a grade 13 student in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Besides cryptozoology, his many fields of interest include marine biology (particularly sharks), animal predatory behaviour, and general zoology. He also enjoys the wonders of punk rock, mountain biking, and surfing.

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Coming Soon in *TCR*: Further installments of a review of alleged sea serpent carcasses (by Ben S. Roesch); more on Chinese cryptids (by Richard Muirhead); further installments of a series on the cryptozoology of the moa (by Darren Naish); great news coverage and much more! The next issue will be out in July/August (1999).